

Washington Merry-Go-Round

New Focus Needed on Political Values

By Drew Pearson

Sen. Tom Dodd didn't intend it that way, but what he did may lead to new ethical standards, new reforms and a new focus on political values.

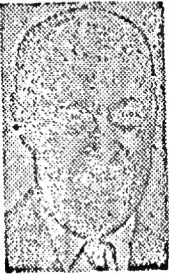
In Connecticut they held "Dodd Day" to raise money for the Senator — money which he put in his own bank account. I suggest that Dodd Day should now be made a day of reckoning, when the premium is not on the dollar but on God.

Today we are drafting 20-year-olds and sending them to Vietnam while we refuse to pass an excess profit tax, plug the loopholes in the 27½ per cent oil depletion allowance or place human life ahead of corporate profits.

Today the aim in Washington is to hire the man with influence who can get what you want out of Congress at the least possible cost to yourself. You look around for the right lawyer or the right lobbyist who has the right friends in high places.

The automobile industry looked around until it found Lloyd Cutler.

The sugar companies and sugar countries looked around for a Charles Patrick Clark and other smart lawyers who knew Rep. Harold Cooley (D-N.C.), chairman of the Agri-



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cultural Committee, which wrote a sugar bill based on lobbying fees and personal friendship, thereby adding \$700 million annually to the housewives' budget.

These are some of the things the new God Day should remedy.

It should also remedy the present system whereby a candidate for office must either be wealthy or get himself in hock to interests who mortgage his future vote. This is no way to make democracy live.

A candidate should not have to pass the tin cup at \$100-a-plate dinners to raise enough money to pay for a few TV appearances on the airways, when the real fact is that the airways belong to the people. They are merely leased to the big networks. Yet, the networks exact the highest rate of all for political broadcasts and the candidate must either pass the hat or mortgage his future votes.

Money, Not Merit

Right now in North Carolina there's an illustration of the inequities of the present primary system that places the emphasis on money, not merit.

In North Carolina's fifth district, the son of a Greek immigrant is running against the grandson of R. J. Reynolds, founder of the Reynolds tobacco fortune. Nick Galifianakis, the Greek-American, took his citizenship seriously, became a member of

the North Carolina legislature, came out as the top candidate in a field of four in the recent Democratic primary.

But in the runoff, money talks, and the man who came in second, Smith Bagley, has the tobacco millions to spend. In one Negro section of Winston-Salem, Bagley had 35 cars hauling voters to the polls, is reported to have paid drivers \$150 a day.

The son of a Greek immigrant can't possibly match this. "They tried to pay me," said Mary Sloan Jones, a Negro working for William Z. Wood, one of the losing candidates. "They had lots of money. Lots of money. Everywhere you go there's signs pasted up on the billboards."

Bagley's money was apparent elsewhere. Members of the Wachovia Bank, dominated by the powerful Reynolds and Hanes families, have been active. Early in the campaign, Harold Thomerson, administrative assistant to retiring Rep. Ralph Scott, and a candidate to succeed him, was offered "a bundle of money and a new home" if he would retire from the race in favor of Bagley. Thomerson's reply was, "Forget it."

After Thomerson lost in the first primary, he let it be known to political leaders that he would support Galifianakis in the second primary. But before he could make an announcement, his boss, Rep. Scott, told him to stay out.

Since the first primary,

Thomerson has received two phone calls offering him amounts in five figures if he would back Bagley.

Chasing Negro Vote

Highly significant is the Negro vote, which is being corralled for Bagley by Negro Alderman Carl Russell, despite the fact that Bagley has the backing of the right-wing White Citizens Council groups. The Negro vote will decide the election, and a large portion of it is reported to be lining up, not for the minority Greek-American candidate, but where the big money is.

Bagley, a handsome young man who came back to North Carolina from California to announce that he wanted to be elected to Congress to date Jackie Kennedy, spent over \$34,000 in the first stage of the election, is spending an estimated quarter of a million altogether.

In other words, it takes either a millionaire or a candidate who gets in hock to the big business to get elected to Congress under the unethical system now prevailing in Washington.

In the old days, an investigating committee from the House or Senate would immediately have gone to North Carolina to investigate heavy spending. But there hasn't been this kind of a probe since the late Sen. Theodore Francis Green of Rhode Island, oldest Senator ever to serve, retired.

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